

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /072 W
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R 231540Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7499
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION NATO
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 24412

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: CONTINUED STRIFE WITHIN UNION OF THE LEFT

REF: PARIS 21872; PARIS 23164

SUMMARY: THE MONTH OF AUGUST HAS BEEN MARKED ON THE
POLITICAL STAGE BY AN UPSURGE IN COMMUNIST/SOCIALIST
INFIGHTING, BEGINNING WITH AN ACRIMONIOUS DEBATE OVER
DEFENSE POLICY AND SPREADING MORE RECENTLY TO MORE
BASIC SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES. BOTH SIDES ARE
DEDICATED TO MAKING THE MOST OF THE COMMON PROGRAM
UPDATING PROCESS, PROBABLY THE LAST OCCASION BEFORE
THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS FOR ELICITING COMMITMENTS
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AMONG NONE-TOO-TRUSTING ELECTORAL ALLIES. REGARDLESS
OF MOTIVATION, POLEMICIZING HAS REACHED A LEVEL WHICH
THREATENS TO ALIENATE SOME CENTRIST-LEANING VOTERS,
BUT PROBABLY DOES NOT SERIOUSLY ENDANGER UNION OF THE
LEFT STRATEGY AS A WHOLE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE MELODY LINGERS ON: THE VERY PUBLIC DEFENSE

DEBATE OF THE PAST MONTH WITHIN THE UNION OF THE LEFT (REFTELS) HAS NOW DISAPPEARED FROM THE FRONT PAGE, ONLY TO BE REPLACED BY EVEN MORE VIRULENT SOCIALIST/COMMUNIST POLEMICS ON LARGER AND MORE BASIC QUESTIONS. AS USUAL, THE CONTROVERSY CENTERS ON THE COMMON PROGRAM AND ITS UPDATING NEGOTIATIONS:

-- THE PCF HAS ESCALATED ITS ATTACKS ON ALLEGED PS REFORMIST TENDENCIES, ACCUSING THE SOCIALISTS OF PROPOSING TO "MANAGE THE CRISIS" WITHIN THE GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF THE EXISTING ECONOMIC SYSTEM RATHER THAN PUTTING THROUGH TRULY BASIC STRUCTURAL CHANGES.

-- THE PS HAS BEEN MORE VOCAL THAN USUAL IN ITS RESPONSE, CHARGING THE COMMUNISTS WITH CREATING ARTIFICIAL ISSUES ON WHICH TO ENHANCE THEIR OWN ELECTORAL CHANCES (WHILE DAMAGING THE UNION OF THE LEFT AS A WHOLE) AND QUESTIONING CONTINUED PCF COMMITMENT TO THE VERY STRATEGY OF UNION.

THE NET RESULT HAS BEEN A PUBLIC SPECTACLE OF LEFT DISUNION, CERTAINLY POINTING UP LONG-TERM DIFFERENCES IN THE PROGRAMS OF EACH PARTNER BUT ALSO LENGTHENING THE SHADOW OF DOUBT WHICH HAS ALWAYS ACCOMPANIED EVEN THE NEAR-TERM POSSIBILITIES FOR COMPROMISE AND CONFIDENTIAL

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COOPERATION.

2. SEPTEMBER SUMMIT: WHILE THERE IS STILL LITTLE SERIOUS DOUBT THAT THE MID-SEPTEMBER LEFT SUMMIT WILL PRODUCE A COMPROMISE SOLUTION, THE CONTINUING POLEMICAL EXCHANGES HAVE MADE THE NEGOTIATING TASK MORE DIFFICULT AND MORE LIKELY TO RESULT IN FUZZIER POSITIONS WHICH BOTH SIDES CAN INTERPRET AS THEY WISH DURING THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN. THE PCF CAN PROBABLY BE COUNTED ON TO MAINTAIN ITS DRUMFIRE CRITICISM OF THE PS, BOTH AS A NEGOTIATING TACTIC IN THIS LAST DITCH EFFORT TO WRING EVERY POSSIBLE COMPROMISE OUT OF THE SOCIALISTS AND AS FURTHER PROOF FOR THE PARTY FAITHFUL THAT THE PCF IS NOT BEING RUN OVER BY ITS SENIOR PARTNER AND REMAINS THE MOST CONSCIENTIOUS DEFENDER OF THE WORKING CLASS. ULTIMATELY, HOWEVER, THE COMMUNISTS SHOULD BE MOTIVATED TO COMPROMISE: MARCHAIS HAS STAKED HIS LEADERSHIP ROLE WITHIN THE PARTY ON THE UNION OF THE LEFT STRATEGY AND IT HAS SHOWN ELECTORAL SUCCESS THUS FAR, SOMETHING THAT 20 YEARS IN THE POLITICAL WILDERNESS FAILED TO DO.

3. SOCIALIST CONCERNS: THE PS IS CAUGHT IN MUCH THE
SAME DILEMMA AS THE PCF - IT NEEDS THE HELP OF ITS
PARTNER TO WIN IN 1978, BUT CAN COMPROMISE ITS OWN
PROGRAMMATIC AND IDEOLOGICAL POSITIONS ONLY SO FAR IN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 24412

THE FURTHERANCE OF LEFT UNITY. MOST IMPORTANTLY ON
THE ECONOMIC FRONT, THE SOCIALISTS FEEL OBLIGED TO
RESIST PCF PRESSURES TO GO TOO FAR, TOO FAST IN PRO-
VIDING IMMEDIATE WAGE INCREASES AND VASTLY IMPROVED
SOCIAL BENEFITS WHICH COULD PROVE RUINOUS TO THE
ECONOMY. BUT IN ARGUING FOR MORE PRAGMATISM, THE PS
FEEDS COMMUNIST SUSPICIONS OF THE REFORMIST TEMPTATION
LURKING BEHIND EVERY SOCIALIST TURN AND PROVIDES EXCEL-
LENT AND IRRESISTABLE GRIST FOR THE PCF'S "TRUE
DEFENDER" PROPAGANDA MILL.

4. THE UNION STRUGGLES ON: IN SPITE OF THE UNAVOIDABLE
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ADVERSE PUBLIC REACTION TO SUCH GOINGS ON, THE OVERALL
ELECTORAL IMPACT APPEARS SLIGHT THUS FAR. THERE IS A
COMFORTING SENSE FOR THE LEFT OF HAVING SEEN IT ALL
BEFORE IN THE VIRULENT POLEMICAL CAMPAIGN OF LATE 1974
AND 1975 WHICH WAS FOLLOWED BY MAJOR VICTORIES IN
FIRST THE CANTONAL AND THEN THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.
THE LATEST POLL SHOWS THE LEFT STABLE AT ABOUT 54 PER-
CENT OF VOTING INTENTIONS EVEN THOUGH 52 PERCENT OF
THE SAMPLE NOW SEES THE LEFT AS MORE DIVIDED. THERE
WOULD LIKEWISE SEEM TO BE SOME POLITICAL BREATHING
ROOM IN THE FACE OF AN ORGANIZING BUT NOT YET UNITED
MAJORITY AND A BARRE PLAN WHICH CONTINUES TO OFFER
LITTLE PROSPECT FOR AN ECONOMIC UPTURN SUBSTANTIAL
ENOUGH TO BE POLITICALLY SIGNIFICANT. AND, AS NOTED
EARLIER, THERE IS A COMPELLING ELECTORAL LOGIC IN
FAVOR OF CONTINUING UNION AND HENCE ULTIMATE COMPRO-
MISE. WHILE INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES CANNOT BE IGNORED
AND RUPTURE OF THE UNION REMAINS GOOD POLITICAL GOSSIP,
MOST SMART MONEY IS ON THE HORSE OF CONTINUED
COOPERATION.
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